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Committee for Programme and Coordination
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Agenda item 7
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-sixth session

Draft report

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Addendum

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019
(*Item 3 (b) (ii)*)

Programme 24
Public information

1. At its 20th and 21st meetings, on 13 June 2016, the Committee considered programme 24, Public information, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019 (A/71/6 (Prog. 24)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the proposed strategic framework, contained in conference room paper E/AC.51/2016/CRP.1/Rev.1.

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Views were expressed in support of the programme and the important work carried out by the Department of Public Information. It was emphasized that the dissemination of information on the work of the United Nations reinforced the support for and the importance of the work of the Organization. Particular appreciation was expressed for the regional and national presences of the Department and the important work of the United Nations information centres.

4. The special role and function of the Department was highlighted in that it cooperated with and worked for the benefit of not only Member States but also the

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entire Secretariat. In that regard, it was suggested that the collaboration between the Department in New York and offices away from Headquarters, in particular regional commissions, should be strengthened.

5. As to the methodology of the framework, it was pointed out that the expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement must reflect the performance of the programme, not those of other actors, in particular Member States. In addition, it was indicated that in the absence of performance measures in the strategic framework, it was unclear how to undertake a proper assessment of accomplishments, which rendered the task difficult.

6. Under subprogramme 1, Strategic communications services, information was sought on the criteria used to identify the "target audiences" referred to in indicator of achievement (c) (i).

7. Emphasis was placed on the fundamental role of civil society and appreciation was expressed for the work done by the Department in that regard, including most recently in the context of the Annual Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations, held in the Republic of Korea in June 2016. The Department was encouraged to find creative and innovative solutions regarding its work with the private sector. Clarification was sought on the meaning of "non-governmental organizations formally associated with the Department of Public Information" in indicator of achievement (a) (i) of subprogramme 3, Outreach and knowledge services.

8. The importance of multilingualism was highlighted by many delegations, including the need to disseminate information about the United Nations in all six official languages and beyond. It was stressed that the concept must be clearly recognized throughout the entire programme. While recognizing and appreciating progress made in the area, delegations emphasized the need to continue to improve the production and dissemination of information in all United Nations official languages.

9. In that connection, serious concern was expressed at the deletion of references to multilingualism in some parts of the strategic framework, in particular as they had only been incorporated by the Committee into the framework at the previous session. Some delegations expressed disagreement with the explanation provided by the Secretariat, namely the lack of resources owing to the decision of the General Assembly on the resources of the Department for the biennium 2016-2017, and it was emphasized that Member States expected resolutions, in particular the resolution on multilingualism, to be implemented in full. It was stressed that it was not the prerogative of the Secretariat to change mandates by the Assembly and assurances were sought that the Secretariat would undertake measures and find innovative approaches to implement the mandate provided. It was also stressed that the decision on resources for the biennium 2016-2017 should not be used as justification for the removal of references to multilingualism and the six official languages from the proposed strategic framework for 2018-2019, as there was still time to seek further resources and consult with Member States on the ways to implement the mandate. It was also recalled that a coordinator for multilingualism in the Secretariat had recently been appointed and the suggestion was made that the Department should consult with the coordinator on ways to implement the mandate.

10. It was noted that the proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019 placed heavy emphasis on new media resources, such as social media or web resources. While recognizing their importance, caution was expressed against overlooking traditional media, in particular in light of the fact that a wide segment of the public still depended on traditional media for information. In that regard, concern was expressed at the deletion of certain indicators of achievement from the proposed strategic framework.

11. Information was sought on the activities of the Department with regard to the observance of international days and appreciation was expressed for the priority given to them by the Department as well as the wide range of activities undertaken. Appreciation was also expressed for the Department's role in relation to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Paris in 2015, in particular the signing ceremony, and it was stressed that the follow-up to the Conference must be accessible.

12. Information was sought as to how General Assembly resolutions 70/93 A and B, on questions relating to information, were reflected in the framework, notably the provisions of resolution 70/93 B, paragraph 16, on the critical need to address violations of the relevant international rules and regulations that govern the area of broadcasting, including television, radio and satellite broadcasting, in the most appropriate manner.

Conclusions and recommendations

13. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly should approve the programme narrative of programme 24, Public information, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019, subject to the following modifications:**

Overall orientation

Paragraph 24.4

Delete the last sentence.

Paragraph 24.5

In the first sentence, insert "with an overall emphasis on multilingualism from the planning stage" after "in its work". Add new paragraph 24.6 to read "The Department emphasizes the importance of the equality of the six official languages of the United Nations, with a view to ensuring their full and equitable treatment in the activities of the Department".

Renumber the following paragraphs.

Subprogramme 1
Strategic communications services

Objective of the Organization

Insert "principles" after "work".

Indicators of achievement

Replace indicator of achievement (a) with "Increased percentage of articles that contain United Nations messages on priorities decided upon by Member States". In indicator of achievement (b), insert "and traditional" after "social".

At the end of indicator of achievement (c) (ii), insert "overall and per official language".

Subprogramme 2
News services

Objective of the Organization

Insert "principles" after "work".

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

Replace expected accomplishment (a) with "Increased utilization by media organizations and other users of news, information and related multimedia products about the United Nations that are produced in all six official languages".

Replace expected accomplishment (b) with "Timely access by news organizations and other users to daily meeting-coverage press releases, television packages, photos and other information products in all six official languages".

Indicators of achievement

Replace indicator of achievement (a) (i) with "Increased number of users of Internet-based United Nations products overall and per official language".

Add new indicator of achievement (a) (iv) to read "Increased partnerships with radio and television broadcasters and rebroadcasters, by language (official and non-official) and by region".

Replace indicator of achievement (b) with "Maintenance of the current percentage of news products meeting deadlines to ensure their relevance to end users in all six official languages".

Strategy

Paragraph 24.11

In the second sentence, replace "if necessary" with "as necessary".

Paragraph 24.13

In the second sentence, insert "and quantity" after "quality".

Insert "with a view to covering all six official languages on an equitable basis" after "language".

Subprogramme 3
Outreach and knowledge services

Objective of the Organization

Insert "principles" after "work".

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

In expected accomplishment (a), insert "multilingual information" after "United Nations".

Indicators of achievement

Replace indicator of achievement (a) (i) with "Increased number of non-governmental organizations from developing countries and countries with economies in transition receiving information from the Department". In indicator of achievement (a) (iii), insert "in all six official languages" after "activities".

At the end of indicator of achievement (b) (ii), insert "overall and per official language".

Strategy

Paragraph 24.16

In the first sentence, insert "multilingual" after "to develop new".